

## Message Text

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12

ACTION DLOS-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-10 AGR-10 AID-05

CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-02 OFA-01 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-04 ERDA-07 FMC-02 TRSE-00

H-02 INR-07 INT-05 IO-11 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

NSF-02 OES-05 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 SAL-01 /149 W

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R 301540Z JAN 76

FM AMCONSUL HALIFAX

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1222

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS HALIFAX 0049

E O 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLOS, CA

SUBJECT: FEDERAL FISHERIES MINISTER LE BLANC ON  
200 MILE FISHING ZONE

REF: CONGEN TEL 034

1. FEDERAL FISHERIES MINISTER ROMEO LE BLANC WAS  
INTERVIEWED BY TELEPHONE BY HALIFAX MAIL-STAR  
REPORTER ON JANUARY 29 AND ALTHOUGH SUBSTANCE OF  
INTERVIEW CARRIED IN LOCAL PRESS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN  
GIVEN ANY OTHER PUBLICITY.

2. MR LE BLANC SAID CANADA WAS WATCHING THE AMERICAN  
SITUATION CLOSELY BUT HAS EVERY INTENTION OF CON-  
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TINUING ITS BILATERAL TALKS AS A PREREQUISITE TO A

MULTILATERAL PACT. (THIS WAS SAID WITH REFERENCE TO US SENATE'S VOTE ON JANUARY 28 ENDORSING UNILATERAL PROCLAMATION OF 200 MILE COASTAL MANAGEMENT ZONE.)

3. NOTING THAT THE US BILL WOULD NOT TAKE EFFECT UNTIL JULY 1977, MR LE BLANC SAID CANADA MAY BE IN A POSITION TO DECLARE A 200- MILE EAST COAST FISHING ZONE BEFORE THE UNITED STATES AND THEREFORE CANNOT BE TIED DOWN TO A SPECIFIC TARGET DATE. HE SAID THAT UNLIKE THE UNITED STATES, CANADA DOES NOT HAVE TO BECOME BOGGED DOWN IN THE ""LEGISLATION MILL" REGARDING THE ZONE. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ALREADY HAS ENABLING LEGISLATION, IN EXISTENCE SINCE 1970, TO IMPLEMENT UNILATERALLY A 200 .MILE ZONE WITHIN 60 DAYS OF AN ORDER-IN-COUNCIL.

4. BY OPTING FOR THE BILATERAL NEGOTIATION ROUTE, CANADA IS, IN EFFECT, FOLLOWING THE SAME COURSE OF ACTION THE AMERICANS WILL HAVE TO PURSUE FOLLOWING UNILATERAL DECLARATION. MR LE BLANC FINDS IT PREFERABLE TO NEGOTIATE BEFOREHAND RATHER THAN IN A SPIRIT OF CONFRONTATION. HE CITED THE EXAMPLE OF ICELAND WHICH DECLARED ITS FISHING ZONE PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF BILATERAL TALKS. AS A RESULT ICELAND HAS CLASHED WITH BOTH GERMANY AND ENGLAND REGARDING THEIR RIGHTS TO FISH INSIDE THIS LIMIT.

5. MEANWHILE, BILATERAL TALKS BETWEEN CANADA AND OTHER COUNTRIES REGARDING A CANADIAN ZONE HAVE BEEN "MOVING ALONG WELL" ACCORDING TO LE BLANC. AN INITIAL AGREEMENT WAS REACHED IN WARSAW LAST WEEK BETWEEN THE CANADIAN DELEGATION AND THE POLISH GOVERNMENT. THE PACT WILL NOW BE PRESENTED TO THE TWO GOVERNMENTS FOR A "SECOND LOOK" BEFORE A FINAL AGREEMENT IS SIGNED BUT THE MINISTER ANTICIPATES NO DIFFICULTIES ARISING.

6. CANADIAN FISHERIES OFFICIALS ARE TO BEGIN SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WITH THE SOVIETS IN OTTAWA NEXT WEEK AS A FOLLOW-UP TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THEM LAST

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FALL. TALKS WITH THE SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE WILL CONTINUE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. BILATERAL SETTLEMENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN REACHED WITH NORWAY AND FRANCE, THE AGREEMENT WITH THE LATTER DATING BACK TO 1971.

7. THE MINISTER SAID CANADIAN FISHERIES REPRESENTATIVES HOPE TO HAVE SEVERAL BILATERAL PACTS UNDER THEIR BELT

WHEN THEY GO TO THE MARCH SESSION OF THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE. THE MINISTER SAID CANADA WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION WITH THE BILATERAL TREATIES TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTION IF THE MARCH CONFERENCE DOES NOT PROVE FRUITFUL. THE MINISTER NOTED THAT VARIOUS NATIONS, WHOSE FISHERIES ARE NOT NEARLY AS THREATENED AS THOSE OF CANADA MIGHT NOT BE IN TOO BIG A HURRY FOR A MULTILATERAL TREATY. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT RECENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT MOST NATONS ARE NOW BEGINNING TO REALIZE THE NEED TO PRESERVE FISH STOCKS AND POINTED TO THE 1975 ICNAF SESSION IN MONTREAL AS TURNING POINT REFLECTING THIS TREND. AT THIS CONFERENCE THE ICNAF NATIONS FINALLY HEEDED THE ADVICE OF THEIR SCIENTISTS AND AGREED TO A 40 PERCENT REDUCTION IN FISHING QUOTAS. THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN SIGNS THE NEW QUOTAS ARE HAVING POSITIVE EFFECTS AS HADDOCK AND HALIBUT ARE SHOWING SIGNS OF RECOVERY OFF CANADA S WEST COAST AND FISH STOCKS WERE BEGINNING TO "STABLIZE" AGAIN OFF THE ATLANTIC COAST. (ACTUALLY, AS ICNAF HAS NO JURISDICTION OVER CANADA'S WEST COAST, THE MINISTER MUST HAVE BEEN REFERRING, ELLIPTICALLY, TO NON-ICNAF AGREEMENTS COVERING FISHING OFF THE WEST COAST.)  
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